



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

MAR 04 1999

Dr. Carl J. Paperiello, Director
C/O: Ms. Cathy Poland
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
MS - T8A23
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Dr. Paperiello:

The Final *Environmental Impact Statements for the Production of Tritium in a Commercial Light Water Reactor (CLWR EIS) (DOE/EIS-0288), Accelerator Production of Tritium at the Savannah River Site (APT EIS) (DOE/EIS-0270), and Construction and Operation of a Tritium Extraction Facility at the Savannah River Site (TEF EIS) (DOE/EIS-0271)* have now been completed and copies are enclosed. These final EISs reflect the Department of Energy's (DOE) consideration of public comments on the draft EISs, issued in August 1998, December 1997, and May 1998, respectively.

The CLWR EIS evaluates the environmental impacts associated with producing tritium at one or more of the following five CLWRs operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA): (1) Watts Bar Nuclear Plant Unit 1 (Spring City, Tennessee); (2) Sequoyah Nuclear Plant Unit 1 (Soddy Daisy, Tennessee); (3) Sequoyah Nuclear Plant Unit 2 (Soddy Daisy, Tennessee); (4) Bellefonte Nuclear Plant Unit 1 (Hollywood, Alabama); and (5) Bellefonte Nuclear Plant Unit 2 (Hollywood, Alabama). On December 22, 1998, Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson designated TVA's Watts Bar and Sequoyah reactors as the preferred facilities for tritium production and this preferred alternative is reflected in the CLWR Final EIS.

The APT EIS evaluates the environmental impacts associated with siting, construction, and operation of an accelerator on the Savannah River Site (SRS). The preferred alternative for APT is No Action, consistent with its selection as a backup technology for tritium production. The TEF EIS evaluates the environmental impacts associated with extracting tritium from CLWR targets, or targets of similar design. The preferred alternative is to construct and operate the TEF at SRS. Because there were only minor changes to the APT and TEF draft EISs, the Department did not prepare completely revised documents as final EISs. Rather, DOE finalized the EISs by reference to the draft EISs and has issued these documents as records of changes to the draft EISs. This approach is consistent with the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Part 1503.4).

These three EISs follow the *Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Tritium Supply and Recycling (DOE/EIS-0161)*. In a December 1995 Record of Decision (ROD), DOE decided to pursue a dual-track approach on the two most promising tritium-supply alternatives:

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(1) to initiate purchase of an existing commercial reactor (operating or partially complete) or irradiation services with an option to purchase the reactor for conversion to a defense facility; and (2) to design, build, and test critical components of an accelerator system for tritium production (SRS was selected as the location for an accelerator, should one be built). The Department also stated in the ROD that a tritium extraction facility would be constructed at SRS.

Last December 22, Secretary Richardson announced that commercial light water reactors will be the primary tritium supply technology and that APT will be the backup technology. DOE will continue with developmental activities and preliminary design on this backup technology, but will not construct the accelerator.

A consolidated Record of Decision to formalize the December programmatic announcement and complete project-specific decisions for the three final EISs will follow no sooner than 30 days after publication of the Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. These decisions will include the selection of specific CLWRs to be used for tritium supply, the location of a new tritium extraction capability at SRS, and limited technical and siting decisions consistent with the backup role of the APT.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the TEF and/or APT EISs (draft or final), please contact Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer, Savannah River Operations Office, at 1-800-881-7292. Additional copies of the CLWR EIS are also available by contacting Stephen M. Sohinki, Director, Commercial Light Water Reactor Project Office, at 1-800-332-0801. The EISs will also be available on the internet at: <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/docs/docs.htm>.

Thank you for your interest in the Department's Tritium Supply Program.

Sincerely,



Carol M. Borgstrom
Director
Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance

Enclosures:

1. CLWR Final EIS
2. APT Final EIS
3. TEF Final EIS